

## Ridgeland's Lee Earns Gates Scholarship

*Kelly P. Champlin, The Jasper Sun*

Meeting Jerel Lee is very much like walking into a ray of sunshine. He radiates calm, good will, and an expressiveness that is not often seen often these days in young men.

And it's no wonder - as one of 1,000 recipients of the Gates Millennium Scholarship, he has every right to be excited and happy. Lee is one of approximately 23,000 students nationwide who applied for the scholarship this year and one of three students from Ridgeland High School who applied. Having earned the scholarship, Lee will be able to follow his chosen career path of anatomical pathologist.



A quiet, self-effacing young man who enjoys spending time with his family, reading and listening to music, he has worked extraordinarily hard to get this and other scholarships. Lee has a list of volunteer and membership positions that would make people twice his age envious, including the founding of "Be a Hero," a mentoring program he began at Ridgeland High last year with several classmates. He is also on the honor roll, the principal's honor roll, is a

National Merit finalist, a Clemson University scholar, Trine University scholarship recipient and Delaware Valley scholarship recipient. His latest projects, an internship with Beaufort Memorial Hospital and

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## Dr. Evans Named Outstanding Rural Practitioner of the Year

The South Carolina Office of Rural Health celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Rural Health Conference at the Marina Inn, Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach on April 11-13, 2011. T. Edwin Evans, MD, Program Director of the Seneca Lakes Family Medicine Residency Program, was recognized as the 2011 Outstanding Rural Practitioner of the Year. The Outstanding Rural Practitioner of the Year award is presented to a rural primary healthcare provider whose service and community commitment has resulted in significant improvement in the delivery of primary healthcare services.

Dr. Evans grew up in a very small town in rural Georgia and from a very early age had aspirations of becoming a doctor. His dream had always been to practice family medicine in the rural South and luckily for us he fulfilled that dream. After receiving a Bachelor of Science

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*T. Edwin Evans, MD, Program Director of the Seneca Lakes Family Medicine Residency Program, was recognized as the 2011 Outstanding Rural Practitioner of the Year.*

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a summer institute through Winthrop called the South Carolina Health Careers Summer Institute, are what truly decided him on a career path.

"I worked in the hospital lab last summer, and learned a great deal from the experience," Lee said. "It was fun and exciting."

When asked what his future holds, he smiles.

"I've applied to a lot of colleges, and I'm still undecided as to which one I want to attend, but my main choices right now are Morehouse College and Claflin University," he said.

His mother, Eldora Lee, is justifiably proud of her son, who is the youngest of three children and her only son. She smiles when asked what she thinks of her son's accomplishments.

"He's had a great support system with his family and has worked very hard to get the scholarships that he's earned. I made sure that he had the time and support to do what he's done," she said.

Lee adds that his family is extremely supportive, stating that if he has to feed the dog or water the flowers, his uncle or other family members step in so that he has time to study.

Lee has not only earned the Gates Millennium Scholarship, but also the KFC Colonel's scholarship, a scholarship from Best Buy and several local scholarships. His advice about scholarships and college applications?

"Give yourself enough time to actually apply for any scholarship," Lee said. "Apply early. Searching and applying for scholarships is very time consuming."

What is required for application for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program? Here are some of the basics. More information can be found at [www.GMSP.org](http://www.GMSP.org). You must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Be African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American or Hispanic American (Please note that you will need to prove either tribal membership or tribal descent if you're applying as an American/Alaskan Native or Pacific Islander)



- Be a citizen, national or legal permanent resident of the United States
- Have attained a cumulative high school GPA of 3.3 on an unweighted 4.0 scale or have earned a GED
- Will enroll for the first time at a U.S. located, accredited college or university (with the exception of students concurrently pursuing a high school diploma) in the Fall as a full-time, degree-seeking, first-year student. First-time college enrollees can also be GED recipients.
- Have demonstrated leadership abilities through participation in community service, extracurricular, or other activities
- Meet the Federal Pell Grant eligibility criteria
- Have completed and submitted all three required forms: the student's application (Nominee Personal Information Form), an evaluation of the student's academic record (Nominator Form) and an evaluation of the student's community service and leadership activities (Recommender Form) by the deadline

Lee, who is looking at a science major, is happy to have received this scholarship, which covers all costs on a renewable basis to the college of the student's choice. He learned of the scholarship from a member of the community who received the scholarship in 2001 and decided to pursue it. It takes an enormous amount of time and effort for this particular scholarship, with a total of eight titled essays and the intensive personal information that is required for it.

*Reprinted with Permission from The Jasper County Sun. Published on Wednesday, April 27, 2011.*

*Jerel Lee is a member of the Lowcountry AHEC Health Careers Academy. For additional information, visit <http://lcahec.com>.*

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium

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## Pipeline Showcased at Let's GO! Expo

Emily Warren, Natasha Chatman, and Diane Mathews, Lowcountry AHEC

On Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> Lowcountry AHEC took part in the first countywide community event of the Eat Smart Move More Colleton County project, "Let's GO!" This program is a comprehensive, sustainable action plan by Eat Smart, Move More Colleton County to improve the community's access to healthy food and physical activity. The campaign seeks to engage the entire community including schools, worksites and faith-based organizations.



In December 2009, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation awarded \$478,000 to Eat Smart, Move More SC to support a two-year, research-based initiative in Colleton County designed to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity. Eat Smart, Move More SC and the Colleton County community are working together to implement a comprehensive community action plan to promote healthy eating and physical activity in Colleton County.

This project is a great fit for Lowcountry AHEC, and three staff members are actively involved: Diane Mathews serves on the board of directors and faith-based committee, Emily Warren is on the community committee, and Natasha Chatman is involved as a committee member of the schools committee. As such, our health careers and health professions students will be volunteers in this service-learning environment.

Each month, "Let's Go!" focuses on either a healthy eating or active lifestyle campaign. On March 5<sup>th</sup> the kickoff event, known as the *Let's GO! Expo* was held and was a big success. In addition to the three staff members present at this event, three Health Careers Program

(HCP) students, one Health Professions Student (HPS), a practicing health professional, and a preceptor volunteered. While we knew that we would have the students there, we were pleasantly surprised to find that Christopher Egan, PA-C, a former Lowcountry AHEC Health Professions student, was there to complete our AHEC pipeline. Kelly Gleffe, a MUSC Physician Assistant student, assisted at the *Color Me Healthy*

booth offering educational handouts on healthy eating and exercise to parents of preschoolers. Health Careers Program students, Terlandra Buckner, Cynea Blocker, and Tiphany Boyd, assisted with registration and participated in the parade. Dr. Luis Vega, LCAHEC preceptor, was a volunteer speaker for one of the health talks and had a booth at the education fair.

This event showed how the AHEC motto of *Connecting Students to Careers, Professionals to Communities, and Communities to Better Health* can work. Lowcountry AHEC is proud to work with community-based groups such as this to be a part of improving the health of our local communities via our staff and students. This project is a wonderful way for our students to learn about the importance of being involved in the local community in which they are learning so that in the future they will have a focus on helping their patients via population focused community health activities.

For more information on this project, please go to the "Let's GO!" website at [www.letsgosc.org](http://www.letsgosc.org).



## Interested in Learning More About South Carolina AHEC Health Careers Programs?

Complete an information request form online at [www.scahec.net](http://www.scahec.net). Information will be sent to you for any of our programs.

Programs Include: Health Careers Academy, Summer Institute & Summer Health Careers Academy

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Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/  
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Contact Us Online:  
[www.scahec.net](http://www.scahec.net)



## Mid-Carolina AHEC Round-Up

### Continuing Education

Mid-Carolina AHEC was proud to provide the midlands Electronic Health Records Vendor Fair on March 9, 2011 so 36 healthcare professionals could meet representatives from eight vendors.

To cover all disciplines of healthcare, Mid-Carolina AHEC has thirty continuing education classes currently scheduled for Summer/Fall 2011 to educate a variety of healthcare providers including physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapists; nurses and social workers. We are excited about adding classes through the SCHOOLS Polycom videoconferencing system and the addition of AHEC U online courses this summer.

Mid-Carolina AHEC is also continuing its tradition of co-sponsoring the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual SC/NC Perinatal Conference in August 2011 in Concord, NC and the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual HIV/STD Conference in October 2011 in Columbia, SC.

### Health Careers Program

Mid-Carolina AHEC is proud to announce that Albany Huffman and QuiNeisha Hall won two of the 16 possible 2011 Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Scholarships. We are also very proud of Johnathan Tucker who was inducted into the National Honor Society.

Mid-Carolina AHEC has started an 8<sup>th</sup> grade pilot Health Careers Program. This program is targeted at students in Lexington and Richland counties, giving them a transition program from middle to high school. The 8th grade program started in January 2011 and has met regularly one Tuesday night a month at Providence Hospital with 57 students being accepted.

The Health Careers Academy and Mid-Carolina AHEC have recently partnered with Hospice Care of South Carolina. The Health Careers Academy students have helped with Milo's Friends bagging dog food for the pets of hospice care patients and doing yard work for the patients. Recently, five students went to Mrs. Johnson's house and helped with laying down pine straw, pulling weeds, tending to plants, and cutting grass. We are so proud of all the students and their willingness to give back to their community.



### Health Professions Students

Mid-Carolina AHEC's Health Professions Student Coordinators Julie Ghent and Jeff Cauthen visited the MUSC Physician Assistant program offices on March 25<sup>th</sup>, along with all other HPS coordinators from within the state. Each spring all coordinators meet with the 60+ students finishing the fifteen-month didactic portion of the PA program to introduce themselves and discuss their upcoming clinical year. This meeting is always a great opportunity to explain what AHEC provides and to answer any questions the students have about their future experiences in the rural areas of South Carolina. Julie was asked to speak on behalf of the four AHECs, since the generic information from each tends to cover the same topics, after which students were able to break out from the large session and meet with the specific coordinators of their choosing. One folder, containing informative material and contact information added by each AHEC, was provided to each student for their future reference.

This visit is very timely and appropriate for getting the students to think ahead about the clinical experience required for completion of the Physician Assistant program because the PA program will soon conduct "the spin"—the lottery process by which student needs and wishes are matched with preceptor availability—at this point in the calendar year. Julie and Jeff trust that it puts these future healthcare professionals more at ease to be able to put a face with a name as they move into another phase of their intense training.

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degree in Chemistry in 1983 from Mercer University, he pursued a medical degree from Emory University, School of Medicine, graduating in May 1987. Dr. Evans left Georgia briefly to attend family practice residency at the University of Virginia, Health Sciences Center in Charlottesville. After completing his residency program in 1990 he obviously got tired of the big city life because he returned to Georgia to practice in the tiny town of Jasper.

In Jasper, Dr. Evans joined Georgia Mountain Family Medicine and practiced there for seven years. He was one of only two physicians providing operative obstetrics in a two county area where he and his partner delivered about 130 babies a year. During his time in Jasper he served as Chief of Medical Staff at Mountainside Medical Center, Medical Director at Northwest Home Health agency and Medical Director at Georgia Mountain Hospice. In 1997 Dr. Evans began solo practice in Ballground, Georgia, an even smaller town, where he provided its 730 residents with primary and obstetrics care.

Throughout Dr. Evans years in private practice, he mentored medical students, providing them with a clinical site to do rotations and the opportunity to get a taste of rural medicine. Dr. Evans soon came to realize that he wanted share his passion for rural medicine with the next generation of doctors. In 1998, he moved to South Carolina to begin his journey as a teacher and mentor. Dr. Evans also become a South Carolina AHEC Rural Physician Incentive Grant recipient.

Dr. Evans saw the decreasing number of primary care physicians opting to practice primary care in rural America and he envisioned a residency program that would expose young physicians to the joys and unique challenges of rural medicine. Through a partnership with Oconee Medical Center and AnMed's Family Practice Residency Program, he helped establish the Seneca Lakes Family Medicine Residency Program. Seneca Lakes is currently the only rural training track program in South Carolina. To date nineteen family practitioners have graduated from the program under Dr. Evans' leadership. A true testament of that leadership is the fact that the majority of those residents currently practice family medicine in rural communities. Through his dedication to rural service and training of the next generation of physicians, Dr. Evans has impacted not only his profession in a positive way, but has also ensured access to quality healthcare for thousands of rural South Carolinians for years to come.

Dr. Evans has been married to his wife Wendy for 24 years and they have 3 children. Their youngest daughter already has aspirations of following in her father's footsteps by becoming a physician.

Congratulations Dr. T. Edwin Evans for being honored as the 2011 Outstanding Rural Practitioner of the Year.

## **New Continuing Educator Coordinator Comes Aboard in Mid-Carolina**

Mid-Carolina AHEC recently welcomed Mrs. Vicki Lundy as their newest Continuing Education Coordinator!

Vicki graduated from Winthrop University in 1978 with a BA in English Literature and a double minor in History and Writing. In 1981, she attended USC-Spartanburg earning her teaching degree. In 2007, Vicki received her master's degree in education with a concentration in curriculum and instruction from the University of Phoenix. Vicki is certified to teach secondary history and elementary education.

The majority of Vicki's teaching career has been in the field of adult education, where she coordinated a family literacy program for 6 years, in addition to teaching adult basic skills, GED prep, workplace education, and ESL for the Springs Katherine plant. Grant writing is a "must-have" skill in adult education if you want to survive, and Vicki has participated in writing many for AE and for family literacy. She is a member of the Palmetto Teachers Association and District 5 Regional Rep. for SCAACE (SC Association of Adult and Community Education). She can be reached at [vlundy@comporium.net](mailto:vlundy@comporium.net).



## 2011 Annual Meeting Celebrated the Stars

The 2011 South Carolina Annual Meeting celebrated the everyday heroes of the statewide system. Through the tireless work of the members of the South Carolina AHEC system across every county in the state, students are trained, professionals are supported and the citizens of the state benefit.

Highlights from this year's meeting included Council meetings, award recognitions, celebrations of each member of the system and walks down the red carpet. A special presentation by Linda Lacy from the Office for Healthcare Workforce Analysis and Planning capped off the day with an overview of the "Challenges Facing the Healthcare Workforce in South Carolina". The entire system left the meeting with a renewed sense of mission.

### Award Highlights Included:

#### Preceptor of the Year

Bryan Allan Burnett, MD

#### Clinical Teaching Site of the Year

Barnwell Family Medicine

#### Continuing Educator of the Year

Chireen H. Hyler, RNC, BSN

#### South Carolina AHEC Ambassador

Becky Seignious



### Years of Service Awards:

#### 5 Years

Steve Boulanger

Tina Fulton

Susan Kyzer

#### 10 Years

Karen Price

Emily Warren

#### 20 Years

Paula Jones

#### 30 Years

Ann Graef

Donald Tyner

#### 40 Years

Becky Seignious



*Members of the South Carolina AHEC system gather for the 2011 Annual Meeting for a day of recognition and celebration.*



## Ambassador Award Recipient Celebrates 40 Years with System

The purpose of the AHEC Ambassador Award is to recognize a member of the South Carolina AHEC system who has made a major contribution to the enhancement of South Carolina AHEC by exhibiting excellence in the following categories: A–Attitude; H–Helpfulness; E–Empowerment; and C–Creativity.

Becky Seignious began her service in support of health professionals and underserved populations in January 1968 as a Staff Assistant for the South Carolina Regional Medical Program (RMP). The RMP was a joint effort of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the South Carolina Hospital Association, and other agencies. Among other activities, the RMP worked early on to improve continuing education throughout the state. The RMP also facilitated the development of directors of medical education in community hospitals who not only could contribute to the development of continuing education, but also stimulate in-service education for nursing and allied health personnel.

Continuing education, postgraduate training in community settings, health workforce needs, regional health education centers...Becky was working to achieve core AHEC ideals even before the organization was established! South Carolina received one of the original eleven AHEC contracts from the federal government in 1972. Becky remembers the award well because she worked all night on the original application. No computers, word processors, or copy machines as we know them; they used typewriters and carbon paper.

During her tenure with South Carolina AHEC, Becky has been involved in a wide variety of student support and recruitment activities. Becky currently serves as the Director of all South Carolina AHEC Recruitment and Retention Programs.

Her ATTITUDE reflects all the positive qualities one could wish for in a colleague. She is professional, cheerful, dedicated, stylish, extremely maternal,

and always graceful under pressure. From cooking at a community reception for the Student Health Coalition in July at a hog farm in the small rural town of Estill, to planning and implementing the annual Practice Opportunities Fair with hundreds of participants, she doesn't even glow (southern belle definition for sweat).

The common denominator of the various responsibilities that have defined Becky's career is the ability to work with people. Working with students, assisting individuals from communities in need of healthcare professionals, or helping healthcare professionals identify practice locations in rural areas of South Carolina all require patience, courtesy, and HELPFULNESS.



*Donald Tyner, Associate Program Director for Administration and Finance pictured with Becky Seignious, 2011 Ambassador Award Winner*

Recruitment and retention activities are, by their very nature, empowering. By definition, empower is, "To equip or supply with an ability; enable." Imagine the number of people who have received treatment from the Rural Physician Program incentive grant recipients and the communities that have benefited from these placements. Becky's work with this initiative reflects not just the EMPOWERMENT of individuals, but empowerment for entire communities in our state.

When one considers the many activities and programs that Becky has helped develop and administer, one realizes that many of these initiatives have been extraordinarily innovative and in many instances, models for other states to emulate. CREATIVITY is certainly one characteristic that is absolutely necessary to develop and maintain the many successful programs that Becky administers.

Becky has served South Carolina AHEC well for longer than any other individual (42 years) and she has the longest tenure of any AHEC employee in the country! She is synonymous with recruitment and retention program in South Carolina. Congratulations on receiving the 2011 South Carolina AHEC Ambassador Award and your approaching retirement.

## Lowcountry Providers Receive Awards



**Bryan Allan Burnett, MD** has been selected as the South Carolina AHEC Preceptor

of the Year for 2011. The purpose of this award is to bring recognition to an outstanding community-based preceptor serving South Carolina health professions students. Each year practitioners volunteer to provide hours of clinical education to students from various health professions. It is their dedication to the education of the next generation of health professionals that is honored with this award.

This year the award committee was impressed by the individual attention Dr. Burnett provides to his patients and students. He exposes medical and physician assistant students to a wide variety of clinical experiences and it is clear that he thoroughly enjoys teaching and helping patients. In the 2009-10 school year, Dr. Burnett served as a preceptor for seven students who were on rotations facilitated by the Lowcountry AHEC.

One student explained, "Not only is Dr. Burnett an excellent teacher, but more importantly he is an excellent physician. He knows each and every one of his patients (and their parents) very well and it is obvious that he has a genuine interest in their care and well-being."

Another student said, "Part of the learning curve in Pediatrics is determining how to interact with children. Watching Dr. Burnett's interactions on a daily basis helped me to model my interactions with children so I could be a successful physician."

Dr. Burnett has been a physician at Barnwell Pediatrics since July of 1999. He is a graduate of Erskine College and received his medical degree from St. Georges University School of Medicine. Dr. Burnett completed his pediatric residency at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC in 1999.

**Barnwell Family Medicine** has been selected as the South Carolina AHEC Clinical Teaching Site of the Year for 2011. In the 2009-10 school year, 12 health professions students received hands-on, patient-centered instruction during their Lowcountry AHEC facilitated clinical rotations at Barnwell Family Medicine. This year's students primarily came from the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Medicine, Physician Assistant Program and the College of Health Professions.

Barnwell Family Medicine's dedication to student clinical education and support of students rotating through their facility is the reason South Carolina AHEC is recognizing it as Site of the Year. The award is based on the following criteria: being an active interdisciplinary clinical teaching site, positive feedback on evaluations completed by students, and letters of nomination from coordinators and students.

Excellent testimonials were submitted by students who have completed rotations at Barnwell

Family Medicine. As one student said, "Rotating at Barnwell Family Medicine with Dr. Boyles as a preceptor has been a remarkable experience. I have had the opportunity to see many patients in the primary care setting with a wide range of medical conditions."



Barnwell Family Medicine has been a satellite office of the non-profit Low Country Health Care System, Inc. since April of 2005. Low Country Health Care System's mission is to provide quality, accessible and comprehensive primary care services to the population of Allendale and surrounding counties, as well as continue to develop new services in an effort to meet the needs of the medically underserved community. As part of their mission they also provide clinical education to health professions students for the purpose of providing a rural experience in a medically underserved area.

*The formal awards were made at the South Carolina AHEC Annual Meeting awards luncheon on March 14, 2011. For additional information about the Health Professions Student Programs at Lowcountry AHEC, call 843-782-5052 or visit [www.lcahec.com](http://www.lcahec.com).*



## Hylar Awarded South Carolina AHEC Educator of the Year

*Cheryl Neuner, RNC, BSN, Pee Dee AHEC*

Chireen H. Hyler was recently awarded "Outstanding Educator of the Year" by the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium. The purpose of this award is to bring recognition to an outstanding educator. Each year a panel comprised of South Carolina AHEC members reviews the nominations and makes the award based on the combination of the nominee's achievement of program based criteria that includes content, methodology, ability to hold participant interest, and the ability to utilize multiple learning styles and promote participant involvement.



practice. She uses creative ways to make her students remember the order of assessments, medications, etc. This is demonstrated by the competency demonstrated following her classes not just by results of a post test, but daily practices."

Ms. Hyler serves as a crew chief for the McLeod Medical Center Heart Reach Critical Care Transport team. She concurrently serves as faculty

for the Nursing Program at Francis Marion University and as a continuing education instructor for AHEC centers throughout the state as well. She has educated thousands of students during her 25-year nursing career.

Ms. Hyler was nominated by the Pee Dee AHEC staff with several letters of support from throughout the Pee Dee region. Chris Davis, BA, RN, NREMT-P and Emergency Services Nurse Manager with Williamsburg Regional Hospital said, "...Chireen is one of the best nurses, educators, and role models available. She has become my friend, my confidant, my 'go-to' person and my mentor". Ann Flynn, RN, Conway Hospital, contributed the following: "She (Chireen) is very knowledgeable and can always share with her audience real situations that they can apply in their everyday

The formal award was made at the South Carolina AHEC Annual Meeting awards luncheon on March 14. For additional information about Continuing Education programs at Pee Dee AHEC, visit <http://peedeeahec.net>.

## Upstate AHEC Welcomes New Leader

Fay Brown joined Upstate AHEC May 16 as Executive Director. She comes to AHEC after serving for nine years as Executive Director and Chief Professional Officer of Foothills Alliance in Anderson, SC.

At Foothills Alliance, Mrs. Brown worked to develop the first Child Advocacy Center in Anderson and Oconee counties and expanded the role of Prevent Child Abuse in Anderson County from a volunteer organization to a full program of services. She worked for 10-years in higher education, serving as director of development at both Clemson and Anderson Universities. She served South Carolina-based Volunteers in Medical Missions (VIMM), a not-for-profit agency sending medical professionals on short-term mission trips around the world, as its first executive director.

In 2010 Mrs. Brown was presented the Award of Excellence in Non-Profit Leadership, a statewide recognition presented annually to an individual by the



South Carolina Association of Non-Profit Organizations (SCANPO). A native of Lebanon, Tennessee, she has been a Rotarian for 17 years, is a member of the board of the Center for Non-Profit Excellence in Anderson and serves on the board of First Steps of Anderson County. She is a member of Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson. The new AHEC director is a magna cum laude graduate in English and mass communications from Middle

Tennessee State University and completed graduate studies at Middle Tennessee State, the University of Tennessee and the University of South Carolina.

She is married to Dr. Nobel Brown, and they have two grown children, Darren and Lauren, and two grandchildren, Nora and Donovan. Ms. Brown can be contacted at [fbrown@upstateahec.org](mailto:fbrown@upstateahec.org).

## 2011 South Carolina Nursing Excellence Conference

*Kristin Cochran, BBA, MHA, South Carolina AHEC*

On March 31<sup>st</sup> the South Carolina AHEC welcomed 176 attendees to the 2011 South Carolina Nursing Excellence Conference at the South Carolina Hospital Association in Columbia. Each year, South Carolina AHEC is joined by partnering organizations across the state to plan and provide this exciting experience for all those on the journey to excellence. The focus of this year's program was to discuss growing and sustaining nursing excellence. This year's conference explored the Institute of Medicine's report "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health," which provides recommendations addressing how nurses can take a leadership role in improving the healthcare system and the delivery of care in the United States. Marilyn Schaffner, PhD, RN, CGRN, who serves as the Chief Nursing Executive and Administrator of Clinical Services at the Medical University of South Carolina, led this keynote session. In 2010, Dr. Schaffner was selected as the South Carolina Workforce Leader of the Year at the South Carolina Nursing Excellence Conference.

During the morning session, attendees also heard from healthcare leaders whose organizations have successfully attained Pathway and Magnet recognition. Karen Parker, MSN, RN, shared her experience with Pathway to Excellence. She is the Clinical Integration Coordinator at Meadville Medical Center in Pennsylvania, which received Pathway to Excellence designation in November 2010. As the team leader, author, and submitter for Meadville Medical Center's Pathway to Excellence designation, she provided firsthand knowledge of the writing and submission process. Pennie Peralta, RN, BSN, MHA, NEA-BC, shared her experience on the journey to Magnet Excellence. She is the Vice President of Nursing at Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital in Charleston. In August 2010, she led Bon Secours St. Francis to become the second hospital in the state to receive Magnet designation.



*Pennie Peralta, the 2011 recipient of the South Carolina Workforce Leader of the Year, and staff are presented a plaque by Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System engraved with their names as South Carolina Magnet Hospitals. Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital is to pass the plaque on to the next South Carolina Magnet hospital.*

The afternoon session featured a panel session on Pathway and Magnet Excellence and included representatives from organizations currently on the journey and those who have attained Pathway and Magnet Excellence. The panelists addressed keys to success in pursuing ANCC Magnet Recognition and Pathway to Excellence and described strategies

in engaging staff in the recognition process. A panel session also addressed examples of best practices supporting collaborative relationships between the academic and practice settings and explained changes in both academic and practice settings in the last five years.

During the conference, District 2 South Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders (SCONL) hosted a silent auction in support of the Palmetto Gold nursing scholarship

program. Attendees also had the opportunity to view 45 posters displaying growing and sustaining excellence (performance improvement), nursing research, and evidence based practice. A committee judged the posters and awarded the first through third place prizes to the following participants:

### **Growing and Sustaining Excellence (Performance Improvement)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>: "Reducing Inpatient Falls through Research, Performance Improvement and Shared Governance," Nan Faile, MSN, RN, CCRP (Lexington Medical Center)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: "Discharge Patient Satisfaction Survey: Strategies to Increase Returns," Stephanie Dutch, BSN, RN, BC and Terrie Kirkpatrick, MS, BSN, RN (Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center, Mashall I. Pickens Hospital)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: "New Graduate RNs Begin Practice Successfully in a Float Pool: MUSC's Story," Sally Potts, MS, RN, PNP; Mary Beth Crummer, BSN, MSN; Linda Horton BS, MSN and Stephen Schaer, BSN, MS (Medical University of South Carolina)

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### Nursing Research

- 1<sup>st</sup>: "The Use of Warmed Cotton Blankets on Patients Following Surgery: A Safe Practice for Promoting Patient Comfort," Lori T. Sutton, BSN, RN, CPAN, CCRN and Faye S. Baker, BSN, RN, CPAN (Lexington Medical Center)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: "A Caring Model: Moving Research into Practice," Darlene Amendolair, PhD, MN, MA, RN (AnMed Health)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: "The Impact of Telehealth Monitoring on Acute Care Hospitalization Rates and Emergency Room Visit Rates for Patients with Skilled Home Health Nursing Care," Landace Woods, MSN, RN, BC (Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center)

### Evidence Based Practice

- 1<sup>st</sup>: "Developing a Nursing Research Fellowship Program," Mary Jo Scribner-Howard, BSN, RN-BC and Patricia Kenney, RNC, MN, FNP (Palmetto Health Richland)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: "OBERT: Obstetrical Emergency Response Team," Ashley Freeman, BSN, RN (Bon Secours St. Francis, Greenville)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: "Sepsis Certification: Creating the Bedside Clinical Expert," Denise Campbell, MSN, RN, NEA-BC (Bon Secours St. Francis, Greenville)

Attendees also had the opportunity to vote for the recipient of this year's People's Choice Award.

### People's Choice Award:

- "Never Give Up: Persistent Teamwork Pays Off for All," Sonya Kay Ehrhardt, BSN, RN (Regional Medical Center)

As in years past, the conference planning committee, Sigma Theta Tau, and the South Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders recognized a Nursing Workforce Leader from South Carolina who personifies the best in nursing leadership. This year Pennie Peralta, RN, BSN, MHA, NEA-BC, was recognized for her contributions to the nursing workforce in South Carolina. Following the awards, the South Carolina Hospital Association sponsored a reception.

Planning for the 2012 conference will begin this Fall. Anyone interested in participating in the planning process should contact Kristin Cochran at 843-792-6977 or cochrak@musc.edu.

## USC Salkehatchie Hosts Health Career Students

Health Careers Academy (HCA) members from the Lowcountry recently had the opportunity to visit the Salkehatchie campus of the University of South Carolina (USC) located in Walterboro, South Carolina. Members gained exposure to clinical skills and had a chance to explore the School of Nursing. Cynthia McClure, APRN, BC, the USC-Salkehatchie Nursing Coordinator and Lowcountry AHEC board member, along with several nursing students, taught HCA members various nursing techniques including determining blood pressure, body temperature, respiratory rates, and pulse. These skills closely coincided with the Health Observation and Data Collection Module in the HCA curriculum.

Tiphany Boyd, a senior HCA member stated, "This experience was a great opportunity to explore the skills that nurses use on an everyday basis. It was very interesting". Tiphany along with many other members found this knowledge very beneficial as they begin to narrow down their specific healthcare interest.

In additions to teaching clinical skills, Mrs. McClure shared information about the academic options available at USC-Salkehatchie. This institution offers a Bachelor Degree in Nursing, which is conducted in partnership with the College of Nursing at the Columbia campus. Mrs. McClure also provided information about the new summer bridge program. The Nursing Summer Bridge 2011 program is for incoming freshmen who have an interest in the nursing field. Students will have an opportunity to earn three free college credit hours and jumpstart their journey into the nursing field. Interested parties should contact April Cone, RN, the Student Success Manager at [acone@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:acone@mailbox.sc.edu) for additional information.

Lowcountry AHEC constantly works to ensure that HCA members are able to find the health career field that is unique for them. The HCA members of the Lowcountry are on their way to becoming future healthcare professionals. Lowcountry AHEC greatly appreciates the opportunity to partner with USC-Salkehatchie in this effort to teach useful clinical skills and explore careers in the nursing field.



## Athletic Trainers Seek Gold Standard Care in the Pee Dee

Stephanie Tutalo Smith and Thomas Campbell, faculty members from Cincinnati Sports Medicine Research and Education Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio, provided an intense two-day (13 hours) Sportsmetrics™ training program last fall for 19 athletic trainers along with Dr. Brian Blair and Dr. Pat Denton of Pee Dee Orthopaedics. McLeod Health and Fitness Center, Florence, SC served as the training location. The McLeod Foundation provided funding to make this program available.

Sportsmetrics™ program is the first training program scientifically proven to decrease serious knee ligament injuries in female athletes, and it is the first training program scientifically proven to improve neuromuscular problems in athletes by increasing hamstring strength and teaching athletes how to land from a jump, and cut/pivot in safe positions, with proper body positioning. Sportsmetrics is an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury prevention-training program that also incorporates performance enhancement techniques. The goal of the training is to decrease the number of ACL injuries in the female athletic population and to help athletes gain better neuromuscular function and strength to further their abilities in their respective sport specific training. This training program will serve athletes in the Pee Dee region including Florence, Sumter, and Horry Counties. McLeod Sports Medicine will incorporate this program in their annual "Peak Performance Sports Specific Training Program" held every summer to help

athletes obtain the maximum out of their sports performance.

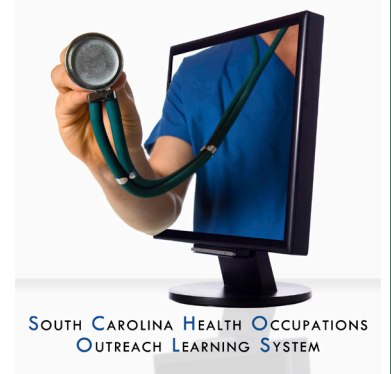
McLeod Sports Medicine is also focusing on a current need for training for "Concussion Management" through a course held on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The impetus for this training was renewed scrutiny of the "hits" have on athletes on sports fields throughout our country and recommendations from the American Academy of Neurology. Athletes are finding lasting effects from concussions later in their lives. Research involving NFL players suggests that repeated concussions may have long-term consequences such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

There are new standards being adopted in sports at preventing and better treating blows to the head. Concussions need to be treated seriously because a concussion is an injury to the brain. Signs of concussion include unconsciousness, unsteadiness, problems with memory or concentration, dizziness or headache.

Professional presenters include Dr. Brian Blair, McLeod Orthopaedics, Florence, SC, Dr. Patrick Denton, Pee Dee Orthopaedics {Medical Director of McLeod Sports Medicine}, Florence, SC; Dr. Jonathan French, Psy.D., University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Dr. William Naso, Florence Neurosurgery and Spine, Florence, SC; and Dr. David Wiercisiewski, Carolina Neurosurgery and Spine Associates Program Director, Carolina Sports Concussion Program, Charlotte, NC.



*New programs are being offered on the SCHOOLS network of videoconferencing systems across the state. Looking for innovative programs in your backyard? Then visit [www.scahec.net/schools](http://www.scahec.net/schools), or your regional AHEC's website, and register today!*



## High-Tech Dentistry to the Rescue

*By Dawn Brazell, Public Relations*

If you have to break a tooth, you want it to be on something worthy—a steak or hard-crust pizza—a hard chunk of ice maybe. Certainly, not a soft, chewy Five Guys' cheeseburger.

You also want this to happen—if it has to—on a Monday when you can rush to a dentist who can gape sympathetically with you at the jagged abyss that has appeared in someone, in my opinion, way too young for such an incident.

But no, this happens on a Friday, just at the close of a long work week, and to make matters worse, I realize I've accidentally swallowed the chunk of tooth.

*Dr. Walter Renne tours the state teaching dentists the wonders of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing systems that are reshaping the field of dentistry.*



I call a friend, a dental school alumna of MUSC, who isn't as alarmed as I. She encourages me to wait until Monday when I can take advantage of the James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine's fancy, new technology and, in the interim, to try to chew on one side.

When I call Monday, I'm in luck.

A new dentist Anthony Mennito, DMD, can take me on, and he'll be assisted by a self-professed video geek, Walter Renne, DMD. Mennito warns me not to be alarmed by how young Renne looks—that he actually tours the state as an expert lecturing on the uses of the computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing or CAD/CAM systems.

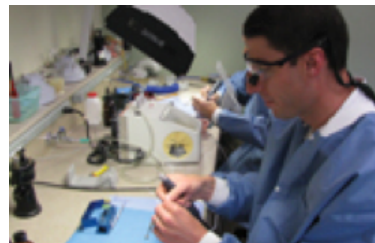
As my tongue probes the jagged opening in the tooth, this is sounding good. Mennito begins the process, and Renne pops in to observe. I am alarmed. He looks almost young enough to be my son. I think maybe I am old enough to have breaking teeth.

Whipping out a magic wand of sorts, Mennito begins scanning my tooth, the images going into a 3-D computer model that can be rotated and spun around from all perspectives. It produces a sort of topographical picture, my teeth a ridgeline of peaks and valleys, with Renne tweaking the contour

lines. He adds anchor points and lassoes an area of the image that isn't needed and hits delete. It's like teeth by Photoshop.

Renne and Mennito continue to refine and tweak the restoration using the computer's software, determining the shape and how heavily it will contact the adjacent and opposing teeth. I'm suddenly glad Renne has spent much of his youth playing video games, having started at age 4. "It's been a long video-game journey," he said, explaining his career path. He loves teaching dentists who might not be so video-game savvy why they shouldn't fear the new technology.

That's not a problem for Mennito. The CAD/CAM systems can be used for crowns, veneers, inlays and temporary bridges. Mennito is working on an onlay for me and takes more images, as they continue tweaking until this tooth fits nicely next to the adjacent ridges.



*Dr. Anthony Mennito polishes up an onlay.*

Happy with the final computer model, they

ship the image off to the "mill" right down the hallway, where a machine begins the drilling process. Mennito explains this process typically takes anywhere from 12 to 23 minutes depending on the system and material. The good news is my onlay restoration is being made out of a solid block of eMax (lithium disilicate), a very strong, durable substance. It comes in 16 A-D shades and four bleach shades with four levels of translucency to choose from so the restoration matches the adjacent teeth and will appear invisible.

I'm liking this. It's a beautiful blend of science and technology.

Renne tells me it won't be long before there are kiosks, where patients can bite on a thin sensor that will automatically capture a 3D digital impression of their bite. In 10 years, the technology will change so much that dentists

*Continued on next page....*

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won't even be able to do some procedures they used to in the old way.

"Look at the photographers who didn't like digital cameras," Renne comments as we watch water splash around a green glass tube that houses the material becoming my tooth. "Now everyone uses them."

Renne said even dentists facing retirement are training on the new equipment. "It's a much more enjoyable way to do dentistry."

When the mill finishes whittling down the block to a tiny ceramic piece of "tooth" material, Mennito takes it to a polishing station and finishes the restoration, and then it's bonded back into my mouth. In this case, he was able to preserve enough of my tooth structure so I didn't need a crown.

Bless him. Some delusions of youth should be preserved.

I like that I came in without a tooth, but am leaving with a tooth that looks better than before without its silver filling. I'm getting younger by the minute.

Mennito checks out the handiwork, probing the gum line checking for "chillen in the streets" a quote

he's learned from one of his mentors about the hazards of residual materials left between the teeth. I marvel that no matter how advanced or high-tech we get, there's no substitute for hard-earned experience and the teachers willing to tirelessly pass that along.

Coming from a private practice in Bamberg where he didn't have all the fancy equipment, Mennito is loving the opportunity to teach and to expand his skills. The technology is only a part of it though. "You'll always have to have those interpersonal relationships," he said, reminding me of a follow-up appointment. "That needs to be learned as well as doing a crown properly."

Some things, machines just can't do.

*Reprinted with permission from the MUSC Catalyst. Originally published on May 14, 2011.*

*Dr. Walter Renne and Dr. Anthony Mennito are recipients of the Rural Dentist Program faculty loan repayment grants, which are administered by the South Carolina AHEC. The Rural Dentist Program was established by the South Carolina Legislature in July of 2005 and assists with the repayment of educational loans for dentists who agree to practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area or serve as a full-time faculty member in the MUSC College of Dental Medicine.*

## Upstate AHEC Welcomes eLearning Coordinator

Deborah Harley, MSN, BSN, RN has joined the staff of upstate AHEC as the eLearning Continuing Education Consultant and Nurse Planner.

She resides in Spartanburg and has 33 years of clinical experience in multiple healthcare organizations. She earned her Bachelor and Masters of Science in Nursing degrees at Gardner-Webb University and for the past 7 years has focused her career in healthcare education.

Debbie's most recent experience was in staff professional development with a strong emphasis as an eLearning coordinator. She trained and oversaw 30 eLearning instructors along with the initial development of a simulation lab. Debbie is the South Carolina Director for CSHET (Carolina Society of Healthcare Education Training) and volunteers her time as a web master for two nonprofit organization websites.

Her desire is to help grow the AHEC U learning management system along with developing Polycom courses and webinars for Upstate AHEC. You can reach Debbie at dharley@upstateahec.org.





## Pee Dee AHEC Goes Pet Friendly with “Bark, Wag, Love” Animal Assisted Therapy Training Program

*Cheryl Neuner, RNC, BSN  
Pee Dee AHEC Nursing Education Coordinator*

Pee Dee AHEC offered its first pet friendly program, which was designed to illustrate the therapeutic value of human-animal interaction in the well being of patient care. The Pet Assisted Therapy Training Program was conducted on March 1, 2011. Tongues were wagging (and a couple of tails) as the Mission Hospital Integrative Healthcare Team from Asheville, North Carolina entered the training room. The team consisted of Pam Hardin, Pet Therapy Coordinator, Phillip Hardin, Pam’s spouse, fellow animal handler and evaluator, and Lourdes Lorenz, Director of the Integrative Healthcare at Mission Hospital. Laurel Hunt, the fundraiser for this group’s mission, was also present to share information on the sustainability of an Animal Assisted Therapy Program. Laurel cited numerous examples of fundraising techniques she has used including a discussion of “Paws on a Mission,” a case study she presented of a successful fundraising campaign. Each member of this team gave the participants detailed information related to all of the necessary elements to implement an Animal Assisted Therapy program in their own facilities. Asheville’s Mission Hospital program has more than 50 pet partners and makes over 6,000 patient visits per year.

An animal’s overall demeanor, reaction to distractions, and the ability to accept petting and affection from others are all areas of consideration when placing an animal in a therapy environment. The handler must also be closely in tune with both the patient and the animal to circumvent any potential harm to the patient or animal during the interaction. Good communication between the patient, caregivers, and handler is critical to ensure the best interaction.

Phillip Hardin discussed his role as an evaluator to determine an animal’s ability to meet these types of criteria. He conducts evaluations of dogs for pet owners through the Delta Society to help determine their aptitude for pet assisted therapy. He and

“Chessie,” Hardin’s own pet who provides Animal Assisted Therapy, performed numerous demonstrations of this evaluation process. Chessie, completely blind since birth, faithfully demonstrated to the group many of the rigors of the evaluation process to the delight of the program participants.



The psychological benefits listed for Animal Assisted Therapy were plentiful as the group addressed empathy, outward focus, development of nurturing skills, rapport, acceptance, as well as the obvious entertainment animals can bring. Physiologically, it has been proven through evidence based research that this form of therapy can lower blood pressure, increase endorphins, and boost the immune system.

The group applies Animal Assisted Therapy in a myriad of ways that includes room to room visits, waiting areas (where stress levels are often high), psych sessions, and my personal favorite: child weight management. What a wonderful tool to engage children in physical activity and so beneficial to both the child and the animal!

The program instructors gave some specific examples where animals made a difference in the lives and sometimes deaths of the patients. Cases were cited involving terminal patients and the importance to many of having a canine companion at the bedside during the last days or hours of life.

This program thoroughly illustrated the therapeutic value of human-animal interaction in the well-being of a patient. It is our hope that seeds were planted in the Pee Dee Region that will result in the growth of local Animal Assisted Therapy programs.

For more information regarding Animal Assisted Therapy, please contact Cheryl Neuner at Pee Dee AHEC, [cneuner@mcleodhealth](mailto:cneuner@mcleodhealth), or Pam Hardin, with the Mission Hospital Integrative Healthcare-Asheville at [pam.hardin@msj.org](mailto:pam.hardin@msj.org).



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### CALL FOR ARTICLES:

The editorial staff of "South Carolina AHEConnects" welcomes the submission of articles, success stories and upcoming events for the Fall Edition.

Please forward information, articles and photos to Ragan DuBose-Morris at [duboser@musc.edu](mailto:duboser@musc.edu). The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2011.

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